May is
High Blood Pressure Month
What is Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries. Pressure is highest when the heart muscle beats or squeezes. It is lowest when the heart muscle relaxes between beats.

The best possible blood pressure	Pre-hypertension	High blood pressure or hypertension
$\frac{120}{80}$ or lower	$\frac{120\text{-}139}{80\text{-}89}$	$\frac{140}{80}$ or higher

You can lower your blood pressure by:

- Taking your medications as recommended by your provider. Please be sure to take your medications when you come for an office visit.
- If you have to be fasting, take your medication with water unless otherwise instructed.
- Stop smoking
- Limit your alcohol intake to less than 2 drinks per day
- Limit salt intake to less than one teaspoon per day
- Reduce intake of caffeine, saturated fats and cholesterol
- Exercise regularly
- Lose weight if you are overweight

http://vaww.nchpdp.med.va.gov/MPT_2006_05.asp

June is
Stroke Awareness Month

Strokes occur if the blood supply to the brain gets interrupted. When the blood supply to the brain gets interrupted, the area of the body involved with the part of the brain that was affected stops working. Your body sends signals that your brain is not receiving enough oxygen. These signs of a stroke include the following:

1. A sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arms, or legs. This usually occurs on one side of the body.
2. Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or under standing.
3. Trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
4. Difficulty walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
5. Severe headache with no known cause.

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/preventingstrokes/hp139102.pdf

Special Feature:
Understanding Strokes

Stroke is the leading cause of long-term disability and the 3rd leading cause of death. More than 700,000 Americans will have a stroke this year.

A stroke occurs when the part of the blood supply to the brain is stopped and brain cells don't get enough oxygen. Strokes can result in difficulty speaking and paralysis.

The risk of stroke increases with age. Although it can happen at any age, the chance of having a stroke greatly increases after the age of 55.

Stroke is more common in men and individuals whose parent, grandparent or sibling had a stroke. The risk for African Americans is significantly higher than any other group.

Special Feature Cont'd:
Understanding Strokes

There are many factors that can increase the chances of stroke. Many factors we can control. By controlling or changing these factors, the risk for stroke can be reduced.

Smoking is the #1 preventable risk factor for stroke. If you smoke, quit. Your health care team can help you.

Diabetes increases your risk for stroke. If you have diabetes, learn how to manage it. Know what the goal is for your daily blood sugars. A hemoglobin A1C less than 7 indicates good diabetes control.

High Blood Pressure is a major cause for stroke. If you have high blood pressure, work with your health care provider to get it under control. Often, high blood pressure can be controlled by eating a healthy, balanced diet and maintaining a healthy weight. Blood pressure control is even more important if you have diabetes.

High Cholesterol can cause build-up in your arteries that slows blood flow to your brain, heart and other organs and can result in a stroke.

Overweight and obesity can result in high blood pressure. Losing weight, eating a healthy diet and exercise can lower your blood pressure.

Physical inactivity can result in overweight and obesity, which increases your risk for stroke. Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week.

Excessive alcohol can raise your blood pressure. Alcohol should be limited to 1 drink/day for women and 2 drinks/day for men.

Did you know?

You can get a blood pressure cuff by asking your doctor to put a request in to prosthetics.

The stroke education program meets:
Miami VA Hospital: Tuesdays at 11:00am in room B-939 (9th floor)

My HealtheVet

My HealtheVet (MHV) is the gateway to veteran health benefits and services. It provides access to trusted health information, links to Federal and VA benefits and resources, the Personal Health Journal, and now online VA prescription refill.

The online prescription refill service is designed exclusively for VA patients to manage medications prescribed by VA doctors. To access Prescription Refill, you need to be a registered user of My HealtheVet. As a registered user, you will also have access to Personal Health Journal where you can record and track your health statistics online.

How to Get Online

Go to **www.myhealth.va.gov** to register. If you registered before November 11, 2004, you must re-register. A Registration Wizard will guide you through the seven n step process.

Step 1
Create a User ID
User ID is the unique name of your My HealtheVet account.

Step 2
Create a Password
The Password is your code for accessing your account.

Step 3
Create a Password Hint
The Hint is used to help you remember your password.

Step 4
Provide Registration Information
Information includes your name, address, veteran status, etc.

Step 5
Accept Terms & Conditions
Read and accept the terms for using MyHealtheVet.

Step 6
Understand Privacy Policy
Read and understand theVA's policy for keeping your information private.

Step 7
Confirm Registration
Review and confirm the completed steps.

In the future, MHV registrants will be able to view appointments, copay balances, and key portions of their VA medical records online, and much more!